



Week of Oct. 10, 2007 – Oct. 16, 2007

Airmen and political activities

AFI 51-902 outlines the dos and don'ts for service members

A popular misconception about service members is they can't participate in political activities. On the contrary, Airmen have a great deal of flexibility in how they engage in the democratic process.

Airmen can vote and express personal opinions on political candidates and issues. In most cases, they can sign petitions and write letters to the editor as a private citizen and they can contribute to political organizations or committees favoring a particular candidate or slate of candidates. They can also attend political meetings or rallies as a spectator or join associations and attend meetings *when not in uniform and not on duty*.

With the political season heating up, Airmen and civilians may also want to discuss politics with co-workers. If you do so informally, keep it professional and ethical. There are strict rules on use of official authority or influence in this area to avoid improper interference in elections and solicitation of votes or fundraising. The workplace is not an unrestricted forum and everyone needs to use good judgment and understand the limits on political activities.

Air Force Instruction 51-902 lists the "dos" and "don'ts" for engaging in political activities. Airmen must (1) avoid partisan activities when acting in an official capacity, (2) only express personal opinions on candidates and issues and (3) steer clear of any conduct which implies official Air Force endorsement or representation. Other points to remember:

- Airmen can't wear political buttons on their uniform at any time, nor can one wear a bracelet while in uniform that espouses a certain creed or motto, with the exception of the POW bracelet.
- Airmen may not have large political banners on their vehicle; however, they can display a bumper sticker or similar device.
- Airmen are not permitted to speak at or serve in an official capacity as part of a partisan club, organization or rally.
- Airmen should always keep themselves informed about the candidates and issues which directly affect them, just be sure to follow the proper guidelines when it comes to political activities. Seek guidance from your local Staff Judge Advocate if you have questions.

Find Air Force Roll Call Online Here: <http://www.af.mil/library/viewpoints/>

Airman's Roll Call is designed for supervisors at all levels to help keep Airmen informed on current issues, clear up confusion, dispel rumors, and provide additional face-to-face communication between supervisors and their teams.